

Secret State LetterMemorandum of the Conference between the German Foreign Minister and Ambassador OSWIMA on 24 June 1942 in Berlin.

At the beginning Ambassador OSWIMA said it had been his desire to inform the German Foreign Minister before the beginning of the great German offensive something about the future military plans of Tokyo. However, to his great regret he had up to now received almost no concrete account from his Government about their military plans. There was, however, no doubt that the Japanese armed forces were making similar preparations for action of great scope in line with the German operations. Whether the direction of such action would be directed against Australia, India, or Russia was not clear; he guessed it would be directed to the South, against Australia.

Ambassador OSWIMA then handed the German Foreign Minister a short note (as attached) according to which no war material had entered Russia via Vladivostok since Japan entered the war.

During the further course of the conversation the German Foreign Minister in general stressed the importance of the year 1942 for our conduct of the war; he believes, as heretofore, that this year should be fully utilized by all means by adopting as daring a strategy as can be conceived.

The Japanese Navy probably still has such important tasks to solve as the strengthening of the Japanese position in Australia, the push to the Indian Ocean, securing the position facing, or in, Hawaii, as well as in the Aleutians. If new heavy blows could be administered to the Americans and English there, this would be of great importance to the joint prosecution of the war. It would be of especial importance if we could join hands somewhere in the Indian Ocean in the not too distant future. The German Foreign Minister was not aware of Japan's plans in this regard. At any rate, it is, however, important not to lose sight of the Russian question. If in view of the reorganization of shipping routes and of the consolidation of the positions thus far captured in the various seas, further maritime operations would perhaps be contemplated only at a later time. Then he was of the opinion that at any case

Russie should be tackled and the Russian enemy finally jointly disposed of in this year. It was the strength of the Tripartite powers that they had proceeded on the offensive from the outset, never waging a defensive war as England has done thus far.

Ambassador OSWIMA stated that he agreed to what the German Foreign Minister had said in every respect and asked him to be convinced that neither he nor his Government believed in conducting the war defensively but that victory could only be secured through further attacks. He had no doubt but that his Japanese armed forces were at this time preparing further operations according to a definite plan and would attack anew at an appropriate time.

The German Foreign Minister replied that the victories of Colonel General Rommel as well as the first attacks in the East and the raids of our submarines prove that this year Germany would go on attacking and he was convinced that Japan would do likewise. He added that also in future a daring strategy would be the shortest road to a victorious end of the war.

/s/ Gottfriedson

(Handed to the German Foreign Minister by Ambassador OSWIMA during the conference of 24 June.)

1. Since Japan entered the war, 20 Russian merchantmen, totalling 102,000 tons, with a maximum loading capacity of 113,124 tons have entered the harbor of Vladivostok. During their voyage, these ships were searched by units of the Japanese Navy. The search revealed that the freight consisted mainly of foodstuffs, flour, sugar, vegetable oil, etc. and contained no armaments or munitions.

2. Apparently, the transport of these goods to Vladivostok was carried out in most cases after reloading in the harbor of Petropavlovsk. The occupation of the western Aleutian Islands by Japanese fighting forces will make this method very difficult in the future.

Certificate:

I, Ulrich Straus, hereby certify that I am thoroughly conversant with the German and English languages and as a result of the comparison between the German and the English texts, I have established that this is a true and correct translation of International Prosecution Document No. 1372A.

/s/ Ulrich A. Straus